

Death Probe...from page 1

of distribution of a controlled substance against Rogers was ordered concurrent to the 40-year sentence by Judge Barrett.

Towns County Superior Court records show that on or about May 10th, 2009, Rogers, while in the commission of reckless conduct, unintentionally caused Branam's death by failing to seek emergency aid for Branam, a guest at his residence.

Court records indicate that Branam was in dire need of emergency medical assistance prior to her death.

The Sheriff's Office was asked to investigate the latest fatal drug-related death due to Lt. Wilson's extensive knowledge and training into narcotics and death investigations.

Lt. Wilson often teaches classes at Towns County High School where he stresses to students that there is a real possibility of death by mixing combinations of drugs or even an overdose of just one type prescription medication.

"The truth is, when prescription medications are used for purposes other than prescribed, they can be just as deadly as any street drug," Sheriff Clinton said. "In fact, they are often more deadly than their street drug counterparts when they are abused."

According to the Georgia Sheriffs' Association, almost 85 percent of Georgia's victims of fatal drug overdoses in recent years have been caused by prescription drugs, Sheriff

Clinton said. Bottom line: no one knows what dosage of any drug can be a fatal overdose for any given person.

Prescription drug deaths should serve as a warning to persons who abuse any narcotic, including various prescription medications.

Another warning: the amount of jail time being handed out by judges after prosecutors and detectives build cases on the distributors of narcotics linked to prescription drug deaths.

Danny Stephen Rogers can testify to that, albeit from Ware State Prison. His estimated release date: June 2027, according to the Georgia Department of Corrections.

Iwo Jima...continued from page 1

Johnson will converge on the campus of Berry College in Rome for the Pacific War Veterans Reunion of Honor.

Both West and Johnson are veterans of the Iwo Jima campaign.

Iwo Jima was of strategic importance to the Allied Forces. The island was located midway between Japan and American bomber bases in the Marianas.

Since the summer of 1944, the Japanese home islands had been reeling from strikes by the new, long range U.S. B-29 bombers. The U.S., however, had no protective fighters with enough range to escort the big Super Fortresses. Countless bombers were easy prey of Japanese interceptor air attacks. Iwo Jima, with its three airfields, was ideally located as a fighter-escort station. It was also an ideal safe haven for crippled bombers returning from raids on Tokyo.

"It wasn't supposed to take very much time to take control of Iwo Jima," West said. "Three days or no more than a week tops."

Three days turned into 36 before U.S. forces could claim control of the tiny island on March 26, 1945, Johnson said.

for 72 hours before attempting to go ashore," Johnson said. "It didn't do any good. All it did was make potholes in the airfields. The Japanese were in the hills.

"The Japanese had turned the island into an ant-hill," he said. "They had miles and miles of tunnels underground and in the hillside. All that bombing and we didn't touch a single Japanese soldier."

Johnson, who served in both the Pacific and Atlantic during World War II, said the Japanese were among the most disciplined military forces of all time.

"They fought to the death," Johnson said. "Before you even encountered the Japanese, you knew you were in for a fight."

The number of Japanese left standing following the 36-day struggle backs up Johnson's claim. Of the more than 21,000 Imperial Japanese soldiers who defended Iwo Jima against *Operation Detachment*, only 1,087 survived the battle and were taken prisoner.

"The Japanese didn't know the meaning of the word surrender," Johnson said. "The only way you were going to take their position was to kill them."

The Battle of Iwo Jima

is remembered for the most famous photograph of World War II: the Raising of the Flag on Iwo Jima.

The photograph portrays five U.S. Marines and a U.S. Navy Corpsman lifting the U.S. Flag atop Mount Suribachi during the height of the battle on Feb. 23, 1945.

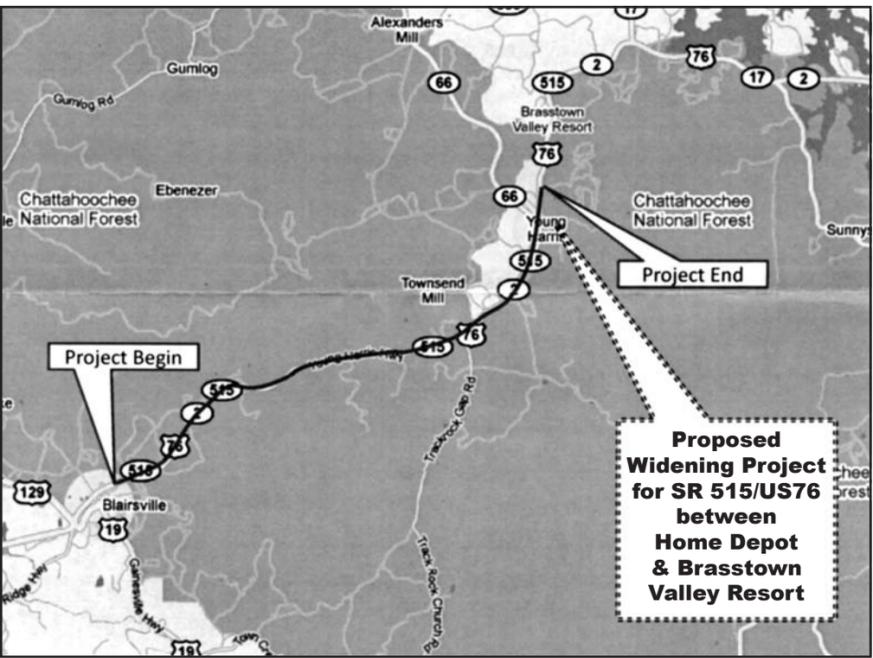
Johnson watched through field glasses from his ship, the U.S.S. Silverstein as the Flag was raised.

"There was the loudest roar you've ever heard when that flag went up," he said. "It was one of the proudest moments of my life. You've seen the photograph, well, I saw it in person and I'm extremely lucky to be here to tell about it."

Three of the men who helped raise the flag, Marines Franklin Sousley, Harlon Block and Michael Strank were later killed in action. The three survivors, the U.S. Navy Corpsman, John Bradley, and Marines Rene Gagnon and Ira Hayes became celebrities once their identities became known.

"I'll never forget what happened at Iwo," Johnson said. "A lot of good men died there fighting for our way of life."

All told, more than 26,000 of the 74,000 U.S. troops died at Iwo Jima.



Widening...from page 1

the project or its reasoning in the scope of the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

The lack of information and details could be because the project is still in conceptual phase of development.

The project would encompass widening and reconstruction of state route 515/US 76 from Home Depot in Blairsville to connect with the already existing

four-lane at Timberline Drive near Brasstown Valley Resort in Towns County and north of Young Harris.

Specifically, the proposed project would consist of widening the existing two-lane and three-lane roadway to a four-lane highway with a median for the majority of the project, state documents show.

In December, it was agreed upon that input and col-

laboration with locals would be crucial to the success of the project and, as a result, a follow up meeting would be scheduled to discuss potential alignment alternatives, state documents show.

GDOT would also seek input from stakeholders.

The Feb. 22 meeting at Young Harris City Hall is expected to be the final stakeholders meeting before concept development proceeds, state documents show.

New Al-Anon meetings/times

New times and meetings for Al-Anon/Ala Teen Family Group Meetings are as follows: Al-Anon: 7 p.m. Sunday

night, Chatuge Regional Hospital, Hiawassee, GA; Al-Anon: 8 p.m. Monday night, "The Mustard Seed", 12 Step and Twelve

Tradition Meeting at Mountain Presbyterian Church, Blairsville; new Ala-Teen meeting: 8 p.m. Wednesday night at Mountain Presbyterian Church, Blairsville; Al-Anon: 8 p.m. Wednesday night at Mountain Presbyterian Church, Blairsville; Al-Anon 12 noon Tuesday, Mountain Regional Library, Young Harris.

Al-Anon is open to anyone who has been affected by another person's drinking. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or a friend.

Call 706-835-5827, 706-897-0628 or 828-389-8981 for more information.